

I CLAIM:

1. A method of printing an electronic document, the method comprising:

in a printing apparatus, electronically verifying predetermined authentication information in the electronic document; and

if the verifying step confirms the predetermined authentication information, the printing apparatus automatically performs a first print function; and

if the verifying step does not confirm the predetermined authentication information, the printing apparatus automatically performs a second print function.

2. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the first print function comprises printing on a print medium the electronic document with an authentication mark.

3. The method of **claim 2**, wherein the step of printing the electronic document with an authentication mark comprises printing a predetermined authentication mark corresponding to the authentication information in the document.

4. The method of **claim 3**, wherein:

the verifying step comprises confirming if the authentication information includes information indicating a first source or information indicating a second source; and

the step of printing a predetermined authentication mark comprises printing a first authentication mark if the authentication information indicates a first source, or printing a second authentication mark if the authentication information indicates a second source.

5. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the step of verifying predetermined authentication information comprises applying to the electronic document a cipher.

6. The method of **claim 5**, wherein:

the step of applying to the electronic document a cipher comprises the steps of:

applying to a first portion of the electronic document an asymmetric cipher to create a first received message digest; and

applying to a second portion of the electronic document a digest algorithm to obtain a second received message digest; and

the step of verifying additionally comprises comparing the first and second received message digests for a match, and wherein the printing apparatus automatically performs the first print function if the first and second received message digests match.

7. The method of **claim 6**, the method additionally comprising the steps of:

if the first and second received message digests do not match, applying to the electronic document a second cipher, the step of applying the second cipher comprising the steps of:

applying to the first portion of the electronic document a second asymmetric cipher to create a third received message digest; and

applying to the second portion of the electronic document a second digest algorithm to obtain a fourth received message digest; and

the step of verifying additionally comprises comparing the third and fourth received message digests for a match, and wherein the printing apparatus automatically performs the first print function if the third and fourth received message digests match.

8. The method of **claim 7**, wherein:

the first print function comprises printing the document with a first authenticity mark if the step of comparing the first and second received message digests produces a match; and

the first print function comprises printing the document with a second authenticity mark if the step of comparing the third and fourth received message digests produces a match.

9. In a printing apparatus, a method of printing a document, the method comprising:

storing on the printing apparatus one or more verification algorithms;

receiving at the printing apparatus an electronic document;

applying to at least a portion of the electronic document received at the printing apparatus a first one of the one or more verification algorithms to authenticate the electronic document; and

automatically printing on the printing apparatus the document with a first authentication mark if the step of applying the first verification algorithm authenticates the electronic document.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of storing on the printing apparatus verification algorithms comprises storing first and second verification algorithms, and the method additionally comprises the steps of:

applying to at least a portion of the electronic document received at the printing apparatus the second verification algorithm; and

automatically printing on the printing apparatus the document with a second authentication mark if the step of applying the second verification algorithm authenticates the electronic document.

11. The method of **claim 10**, wherein:

the step of printing the document with a first authentication mark comprises marking a print media with ink to form on the print media an image corresponding to the electronic document and the first authentication mark; and

the step of printing the document with a second authentication mark comprises marking a print media with ink to form on the print media an image corresponding to the electronic document and the second authentication mark.

12. A document printer for printing electronic documents onto print media, the printer comprising:

an authenticity verifier for examining an electronic document to confirm predetermined authenticity information in the electronic document;

a print element for applying the image of the electronic document to a print medium.

13. The document printer of **claim 12**, wherein:

the print element automatically performs a first print function if the authenticity verifier confirms the predetermined authenticity information in the electronic document; and

the print element automatically performs a second print function if the authenticity verifier does not confirm the predetermined authenticity information in the electronic document.

14. The document printer of **claim 13**, wherein the first print function comprises applying to the print medium an authenticity mark if the authenticity verifier confirms the predetermined authenticity information in the electronic document.

15. The document printer of **claim 14**, wherein the authenticity verifier contains first and second sets of authenticity information;

the authenticity verifier confirms the first and second sets of authenticity information;

the first print function comprises applying to the print medium a first authenticity mark if the authenticity verifier confirms the first set of authenticity information in the electronic document; and

the first print function comprises applying to the print medium a second authenticity mark if the authenticity verifier confirms the second set of authenticity information in the electronic document.